



Main Street Messenger

2012 volume one



Main Street Iowa on the grow!

Three New Communities Designated

At a special ceremony held at the Iowa State Capitol on February 7th, Governor Terry E. Branstad announced that three Iowa communities were selected to join the Main Street Iowa program: Chariton, Jefferson and Lansing. The addition of these new cities brings the total number of Main Street communities in Iowa to 48.

"Iowa's historic main streets are the heart and soul of our communities," said Governor Branstad. "We will continue to do whatever we can to keep Iowa's downtowns strong and vibrant for business owners, workers, residents and visitors. I am pleased to welcome each of these communities into the Main Street family and wish them much success in the future."

Main Street communities across Iowa are investing in their city centers. Preserving rich architecture, restoring historic properties, and promoting its unique assets through festivals and special events that invite all ages to experience the best of community and strive to strengthen the economic climate for growing the business base downtown.

For more than 25 years, the Main Street Iowa program and its communities have been looked upon as the "best of the best" in a national effort to revitalize downtowns across the country.

Main Street is a long-term development strategy. It requires a community to invest a significant amount of time educating the community and building broad-based support in order to lay a solid foundation for the program. It is critical that a community develop the capacity for long-term downtown revitalization success.

The Iowa Economic Development Authority remains committed to growing the number of Main Street communities in our state and in providing the best training and technical assistance possible to improve the economic, physical and social health of their Main Street districts. Between 2009 and 2011 seven new programs were added.

Through the application and presentation process, the communities selected have demonstrated strong partnerships, a high level of volunteerism, and a commitment to the revitalization of their Main Street districts.

We are confident that these communities' programs will thrive and grow for many years to come, and are pleased to welcome Chariton, Jefferson and Lansing into the Main Street family.



Attendees representing the new Main Street Iowa communities of Chariton, Jefferson and Lansing

three new Main Street Iowa communities

Chariton

Chariton, population 4,345, is located in Lucas County in southern Iowa, approximately 60 minutes south of Des Moines. Chariton became a certified local government in 1996. The community celebrates the heritage of the Amish and Ukrainian residents who call Chariton home with special events.

The new Main Street district is just over 8 square blocks, and includes a Ben Franklin store which is now owned and operated by a young entrepreneur.

Chariton worked very hard to get the Main Street word out. This included a Main Street Blitz in November to gain support. Their application demonstrated a tremendous amount of local support for Main Street. They know there is lots of work ahead and are confident that over time downtown will once again flourish and prosper.



Chariton

Jefferson

Jefferson is a central Iowa community located in Greene County with a population of 4,345. Downtown Jefferson is listed on the National Register of Historic places. Because of their highly regarded Bell Tower, roofs on downtown buildings are spotless!

The community invested the past year wisely, investigating the Main Street Iowa program, visiting other communities and talking with local businesses, basically building “consensus” for this new initiative.

They did their homework. They took the National Trust’s “This Place Matters” campaign and fashioned their own version called “Jefferson Matters” which included a Facebook page.

Their preparation and support was evident in their written application and in their very creative presentation depicting Jefferson of 100 years ago.



Jefferson

Lansing

Located on the banks of the Mississippi River, and about as far northeast as you can travel and still be in Iowa, is Lansing. With a population of 999 full-time residents, Lansing is now Iowa’s second smallest independent Main Street community.

Not quite ready to apply in 2009, they decided to wait until 2010. They had to regroup once they learned that as a result of budget cuts, an application cycle would not occur. Undaunted, Lansing began the process to get started – incorporated, received non-profit status, hired a Main Street Director and attended whatever training it could. This tiny town had 115 pledges totaling \$45,000 a year for their Main Street program.



Lansing

This hard working group met every challenge head on. Their motto is “Life is a Journey...Lansing can be the destination!”

seventeen challenge grants announced

In two separate rounds, the Iowa Economic Development Authority announced \$1,083,720 in HUD Challenge Grants awarded to 17 Iowa communities through a fund administered by the Iowa Downtown Resource Center and Main Street Iowa. The grants will benefit local improvement projects with a combined total investment of over \$6.1 million.

Governor Terry E. Branstad said that “HUD/Main Street Iowa challenge grants provide a valuable tool for economic development and historic preservation in the historic commercial districts of Main Street Iowa communities. They have consistently demonstrated impressive local financial match, growth of new small business and the preservation of Iowa’s unique sense of place found on Main Streets throughout the state.”

“Iowa’s Main Streets are where people come together, where small businesses prosper and the local economy thrives. Preserving them means investing in the projects that make our Main Streets what we love about Iowa,” said Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA). “With the challenge grants, these towns and communities will have the resources to do just that by restoring buildings, maintaining historic landmarks and taking on projects that benefit the local area. I am proud to have been able to deliver funding for this program.”

The Challenge Grant program is funded through an appropriation from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Since the first appropriation in 2002, this program has awarded a total of \$4.9 million and has leveraged approximately \$36 million in local investments.



Burlington's Preservation Station rehabilitation funded in part by a 2009 Main Street Iowa Challenge Grant

2011-2012 Main Street Iowa Challenge Grant Recipients

| Community | Award | Total Project Cost |
|--|-----------|--------------------|
| Ames | \$100,000 | \$386,133 |
| Cedar Falls | \$100,000 | \$209,500 |
| Cedar Rapids (Czech Village/New Bohemia) | \$50,000 | \$196,144 |
| Colfax | \$87,220 | \$174,440 |
| Des Moines (6th Avenue Corridor) | \$50,000 | \$123,000 |
| Dubuque | \$100,000 | \$649,804 |
| Hamilton County (Jewell) | \$100,000 | \$221,660 |
| Le Mars | \$30,000 | \$60,000 |
| Manning | \$50,000 | \$139,178 |
| Marshalltown | \$50,000 | \$162,000 |
| Mount Pleasant | \$100,000 | \$3,070,000 |
| Mount Vernon | \$36,500 | \$73,000 |
| Ottumwa | \$50,000 | \$150,000 |
| State Center | \$50,000 | \$241,479 |
| Washington | \$50,000 | \$120,860 |
| West Branch | \$30,000 | \$60,000 |
| Woodbine | \$50,000 | \$100,000 |



Project recipients with Governor Terry E. Branstad, Senator Tom Harkin and Iowa Economic Development Authority leadership on hand to present the awards.

farewell Jane

After seventeen years with the Iowa Department of Economic Development (now Iowa Economic Development Authority), Jane Seaton has retired as State Coordinator for the Main Street Iowa program. Her last day was February 10th, 2012.

Jane has dedicated her professional life to serving the needs of our participating Main Street communities. From counseling to on-site services to coordinating training and managing Main Street Challenge Grants and I-JOBS projects, Jane has exemplified the spirit of Main Street at work. She will be greatly missed by all of us.

At a farewell reception held in her honor, Jane said "I have been privileged to work with some of Iowa's finest people in some great communities small and large. Most days this has been my dream job!"

"I have had the privilege of working with local leaders who know and understand that if they want good things to happen, they must be the means to achieve that goal. Passion and commitment are the fundamental differences between a strong, successful program and one that struggles. Each of you who give of your time, money and expertise should be congratulated and I thank you for your willingness to serve. It has been an honor to work with and for you in the betterment of your city centers."



"To the program staff in our communities, the over-worked and under-paid individuals who invest countless hours in a job that is many times frustrating and thankless, I say thank you for putting service before self. Without you, chaos would reign in your local programs and our jobs would be next to impossible."

"Katherine Graham once said, 'If you love what you do and feel that it matters . . . how could anything be more fun!' And I have had a whole lot of FUN! Thank you."

We are happy for Jane's promising future of joining her husband in retirement and having more time for leisure travel. Jane's supportive and nurturing personality will be missed by every one of us here at the Downtown Resource Center.

We wish Jane well in this next chapter of her life, and thank her for her dedication and service.



new training resources available

Main Street Iowa has utilized its USDA Rural Community Development Initiative (RCDI) Grant to provide a variety of training opportunities to local programs. Main Street Iowa/ Iowa Economic Development Authority developed training materials and videos that will be relevant and useful long after the grant is completed in March of 2012. These are all available at <http://www.iowaeconomicdevelopment.com/community/community/downtown-training.aspx>

Recently Released Publications

Local Energy Leadership Series

Titles include:

- Energy Efficiency Basics
- Utility Incentives and Services
- Energy Audits and Assessment Tools
- Grants, Loans and Tax Incentives
- Energy Solutions for Food Businesses
- Renewable Energy for Historic Commercial Buildings



Energy Savings Progress for Woodbine and West Union Main Street Districts

This summarizes an assessment of energy savings on five buildings in each Main Street district that completed energy efficiency improvements between January 2009 and August 2010. Energy use before and after improvements was analyzed in a variety of building uses common to Main Street districts, including a courthouse, bank, and two restaurants.

Pocket Tool for Better Meetings

This is a handy outline of tips and tricks on developing an effective agenda, preparing the meeting space, meeting warm-ups and agreements, how to manage and facilitate discussion, and closing the meeting.

Training Video Series

Three videos feature interviews with local leaders and business owners, before and after photos, and compelling facts about some of the most innovative and sustainable revitalization projects in Main Street districts that occurred in 2011.

Titles include:

- Changing Stormwater into a Resource
- Changing Energy Use Downtown
- Changing the Face of Downtown

These training resources and so many others would not have been possible without the support of USDA Rural Development. USDA has been a tremendous partner, and Main Street Iowa will continue to seek opportunities to work with them in the future.



where are they now?

In 2009, three urban neighborhood districts were integrated into Main Street Iowa's downtown revitalization program. Urban commercial districts have unique differences, but it was, and still is our belief that the same principles and practices are applicable no matter what the size of the community.

One of those districts was Cedar Rapids' Czech Village/New Bohemia who entered the program with 0% occupancy in their district, due to the devastating floods of 2008.

Originally home for many immigrants in the early 20th century, the structures in the district represent the importance of home-ownership and entrepreneurship. Many of these were severely damaged in the flood, but through hard work and dedication they are rebuilding.

Here's a look at the progress in the district in the last three years.

- Since 2009, Main Street has helped private investors create 59 new jobs in the district. \$4,094,850 million private dollars have been invested in rehabilitation.

Suchy Building (1006 3rd Street SE)

- Total Project Cost - \$300,000
- \$50,000 Main Street Challenge Grant HUD – \$50,000 I-Jobs Grant for the Suchy Building
- Owner contribution - \$200,000

Jon Jelinek Properties (1113 & 1117 3rd Street SE)

- Total Project Cost - \$197,854
- \$50,000 Main Street Challenge Grant HUD – split into two projects:
 - 1113 3rd Street SE - Owner Contribution: \$46,709; grant amount: \$10,000
 - 1117 3rd Street SE - Owner Contribution: \$101,145; grant amount: \$40,000
- Leveraged \$75,000 ITC grant into \$235,000 private dollars that were invested in property improvements. Assisted 22 buildings within the district with 22 matching grants or mini grants. This includes 12 buildings on the west side and 10 buildings on the east side of the river. This also includes an \$8,000 matching grant for façade rehabilitation for the C.S.P.S. Hall.
- Worked with the city and district business owners on \$3 million 3rd Street Streetscape project.
- Recipient of \$1200 grant through the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation Youth Power Grant program for the "Czech Out Our Flowers," program. This event brought together Franklin Middle Schools 7th grade science class, Czech Village Association and Main Street. Main Street worked with three students from Franklin Middle School to prepare the grant and to present it to the Youth Power Board. Also received a private donation of \$200 toward the project.



Celebrating the move of the Czech Museum in Czech Village/New Bohemia Main Street District

- Working with the city and area groups to create, organize and implement district design standards.
- Main Street Iowa provided design technical assistance for 14 buildings in the district: The Red Frog, Frame Trader, Deda & Babi's Antique Store, Salvation Army, Ideal Theater, Matyk Building, Hach Building, Suchy Building, Czech Outlet Building & Antique Store, Papich Kuba Funeral Home, Diamond Vogel Building, Little Bo's, Craig McCormick's and Smid Building.
- Worked with the city, Alliant and district groups on finding a solution for a much needed electrical substation within the district.
- Two to three Neighborhood/District clean-up projects per year, each attracting 10 – 40 volunteers
- Houby Days was revitalized and set on a path of success. We assisted in arranging \$6,100 of donations to underwrite the event, which was attended by an estimated 5,000 people.
- Created EcoFest in 2010 and in 2011. New this year was an artist in residence from Germany who created a sculpture from discarded materials, many children-friendly exhibits and workshops, and a 5K run. The event brought about 2,000 down to the New Bohemia district despite the rainy day.
- Assisted in arranging \$2,000 in contributions toward the 2010 & 2011 Czech Fall Festival
- Provided additional assistance and volunteers for the following events:
 - St. Joseph's Day Parade 2009-2011
 - 2x2xU Annual Outdoor Local Art Exhibition 2009-2011
 - Antique Fair
 - Czech Village Resale Road Show in 2010
 - Halloween Parade and Trick or Treat, 2010
 - St. Mikulas Days, 2009 - 2010
 - Old Prague Christmas Market, 2010 and 2011
 - Very Cherry Christmas 2009 through 2011

bits & pieces

National Main Streets Conference

April 1 – 4 in Baltimore, Maryland

The National Main Streets Conference showcases and celebrates the innovative techniques and practices that make the Main Street Approach® one of the most powerful economic development tools in the nation. Whether you hail from an urban business district, small rural downtown, or some place in between, you will find real solutions to common problems and techniques to help you not only survive this economic downturn, but also find ways to position your Main Street and your community to thrive long after these difficult times are gone and forgotten.

Beginner or expert, small town or urban business district, people who work, volunteer, or are interested in community revitalization will value this educational and networking experience.

For more information, visit <http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/training/conference/>



25th Annual Iowa Downtown Summit

Please join us in Keokuk, Iowa, August 21 & 22, 2012 for the 25th annual Iowa Downtown Summit.



The 25th Annual Iowa Downtown Summit, sponsored by the Iowa Economic Development Authority and the Federal Home Loan Bank, Des Moines, provides attendees the opportunity to make new connections, hear about the latest trends, acquire practical information and ideas and learn strategies for historic preservation-based commercial district revitalization that is relevant to rural, mid-sized and urban communities and urban districts.

The theme this year is "Renewing the Power of Downtown". Prominent and knowledgeable downtown and commercial district development experts from Iowa and across the United States will share best practices and offer valuable insight, advice and training that will help enhance the local efforts of addressing historic commercial district vibrancy and competitiveness.

Conference plans and online registration will be available mid-June at <http://www.iowaeconomicdevelopment.com/register>.

Spring Meeting on Place

Iowa Economic Development Authority/Main Street Iowa is partnering with the Iowa Chapters of American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA), American Institute of Architects (AIA), American Planning Association (APA), and the Center of Sustainable Communities (COSC) to host a daylong conference on "Place". The event will be held on April 10th, 2012 at the Scheman Building in Ames. There will be a focus on sustainability as well as community revitalization, and will cover a broad range of topics on how to make the places of Iowa more compelling, to enhance the state as a great place to live, work and play. Registration information will be on-line in March. For more information, contact Jessica Reinert at jreinert@aiaiowa.org

save the date...04.10.2012



MSI cumulative totals (July 1, 1986 – present)

Over the years, by working together with the state, Main Street Iowa communities have realized the benefits of more than two million hours of volunteer time committed to improving their city centers, a significantly increased job and business base, and over a billion dollars in private investment to purchase, construct and rehabilitate downtown property.

Cumulative figures are condensed from reports submitted each month by each local Main Street program.

Because of the participating communities' efforts, we are able to report the 2011 Year End Economic Impact Stats:

> MSI-Stats [PDF: 26k] (<http://www.iowaeconomicdevelopment.com/community/mainstreetiowa/downloads/msistats.pdf>)

downtown buildings can smile now

by Bob Brueck, reprinted with permission.

Downtown buildings across America can begin to breathe easier as their future is brighter, for both their use and upkeep. After decades of decay due to downtown assets leaving for a brighter suburbanite future, these buildings have finally found a positive answer with a survival tactic never before used. It's called upscale upper story living.

Yes, there have always been people living downtown with dim lights and wallpaper hanging and no one looking out for their safety. That played a large part in downtown decay as people stayed away for their own safety.

Simply stated, developers are making every floor of every building hold up its own weight, both structurally and financially with this new weapon. The future of these white elephants is changing from a liability to a great investment. After people see what charm and space can be had at an affordable price, they see the possibilities of downtown living.

Both young professionals and older generations who have this lifestyle say they love it.

Downtowns across the country are the heartbeat of every community.



Upper story living in Burlington



Upper story living in Oskaloosa

Companies both new and wishing to expand use the shape and vitality of a community's downtown as a gauge for coming of leaving. The positives of downtown upper stories are numerous.

Income from every floor helps defray the ongoing expense of building maintenance. Local, state and national main streets encourage Congress and local governments to help developers with tax incentives, grants and abatements knowing that using these buildings to their potential will create a downtown tax base never seen before.

We know downtowns filled with department stores are a thing of the past, but present generations are finding an even better use in upscale upper story living joined by government agencies and niche shops that are still the foundations on the main floors.

Perhaps the best positive is our generation and future generations are using and improving what we have, and let farmland remain farmland.

staff listing

Main Street Iowa and Downtown Resource Center

| | | | |
|---------------------|--------------|----------------------------|--|
| Terry Poe Buschkamp | 515.725.3075 | terry.buschkamp@iowa.gov | Main Street District Specialist |
| Debi Flanders | 515.725.3055 | debi.flanders@iowa.gov | Main Street District Specialist |
| Thom Guzman | 515.725.3058 | thom.guzman@iowa.gov | Iowa Downtown Resource Center Director |
| Susan Matthews | 515.725.3059 | susan.matthews@iowa.gov | Office Specialist |
| Tim Reinders | 515.725.3077 | tim.reinders@iowa.gov | Design Specialist |
| Darlene Strachan | 515.725.3057 | darlene.strachan@iowa.gov | Assistant State Coordinator |
| Jim Thompson | 515.725.3061 | jim.thompson2@iowa.gov | Business Specialist |
| Michael Wagler | 515.725.3051 | michael.wagler@iowa.gov | Design Specialist |
| Kindra Wisniewski | 515.725.3172 | kindra.wisniewski@iowa.gov | Graphic Design |

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